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Subject: EPA Mid-Atlantic Region Headlines - Wednesday, February 28, 2018

EPA Mid-Atlantic Region Headlines

Wednesday, February 28, 2018

*** DAILY HOT LIST ***

11 people sickened after hazmat incident at Fort Myer in Arlington

WASHINGTON POST Eleven people, including some Marines, “started to feel ill” after an envelope containing an unknown substance was opened Tuesday at Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall in Arlington, authorities said. At around 5:55 p.m., the Arlington Fire Department tweeted that 11 people were sickened after a letter was opened in an administrative building at Fort Myer. Three people were transported to the hospital, the tweet said, and were in stable condition. A spokesman with the Arlington County Fire Department said firefighters were assisting Fort Myer officials with the incident. The U.S. Marine Corps said in a tweet that a letter containing an unknown substance was received, and the building where it was opened was evacuated. Several Marines are now getting medical treatment, the tweet said, and the Marines will be coordinating with the FBI to investigate further. Maj. Brian Block, a Marine spokesman, said in a statement Tuesday night that people in the building where the envelope arrived “took immediate preventative measures by evacuating the building.” U.S. military officials are coordinating with local hazmat teams and the FBI. “Several Marines are receiving medical care as a result of this incident,” Block said, adding that the investigation is ongoing. Photographs posted on social media show numerous police cars at the Henderson Hall gate of the base, a complex that includes several small military installations near the Pentagon. Henderson Hall is at the southern edge of Arlington National Cemetery, and used as a headquarters building for the service. Fort Myer firefighters said they were trying to identify the substance.

State health department to test residents’ blood for chemicals

DOYLESTOWN INTELLIGENCER After mysterious chemicals were found in their drinking water in 2014, residents of Bucks and Montgomery County towns have wondered how much of the chemicals, called PFAS, had accumulated in their bodies. Now, hundreds will have an answer, after the state received grant money to test their blood this spring. A grant awarded last week to the Pennsylvania Department of Health will finally answer the question stuck in the minds of many Bucks and Montgomery County residents: Just how bad is it? Tens of thousands of residents along the counties’ shared border found out several years ago that they had been exposed to unregulated PFAS chemicals in their drinking water, potentially going back decades. The chemicals, used in firefighting foams at nearby military bases, could have been in the water as far back as the 1970s, building up in their blood all along until the contamination was discovered in 2014. To date, only one local resident has publicly released the results of a blood test for the chemicals, which is difficult to orchestrate due to how rare the chemicals are. As part of a 2017 lawsuit, Ivyland resident Dorothy Palmer revealed she had a blood level of 31 parts per billion of one of the chemicals, which is 15 times the national average. But hundreds more could know their levels soon. Last week, the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), a professional organization, awarded a \$175,000 grant to the DOH “to support biomonitoring efforts” for the chemicals, according to an announcement on its website. New York state also received \$175,000, with funding originating from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Biomonitoring is a term typically used to describe blood testing for PFAS. In an email, PADOH spokesperson Nate Wardle confirmed the funds

will be used for testing. However, the tests costs hundreds of dollars per person, and Wardle said only a few hundred residents will be included. That's compared to the more than 70,000 current residents who are believed to have been exposed to high levels of the chemicals in Warminster, Warrington and Horsham, in addition to uncounted numbers of past residents. "We are hoping to offer biomonitoring to approximately 400 residents," Wardle wrote in an email. "Resident households will be selected based off of (CDC protocols), which involve random sampling based on address."...

Tainted water found in private well near Blades

DELAWARE PUBLIC MEDIA Testing on private wells in Blades area have discovered water from at least one is contaminated. Officials from DNREC and Delaware's Division of Public Health say one of the 39 private wells sampled by the EPA found elevated levels of perfluorinated compounds (PFCs). The homeowner has been contacted and given a home carbon filtration system for their water supply. So far, 15 of the 39 private well test results have been received back from the EPA. More are expected to come back this week, and state officials say anyone with high PFC levels will receive a filtration system. Earlier this month, the Town of Blades municipal wells were found to be tainted by PFCs. The town received a carbon filtration system to treat its drinking water system, and last week tests showed that water was safe to drink and use for cooking again once again. DNREC and DPH will hold another public meeting on the drinking water in and around Blades Thursday night. The agencies say the 7 p.m. meeting at the Blades Fire hall will focus more on private wells in the area.

Chesapeake Bay: Md. lawmakers urge boycott of Pa. over pollution

GREENWIRE Fed up with Pennsylvania pollution fouling the Chesapeake Bay and worried that U.S. EPA won't act decisively, a pair of Maryland state delegates are proposing an unusual solution: a boycott of the Keystone State. "At some point in time, you've got to stop getting punched in the face and stand up to a bully, regardless of the consequences," Del. Benjamin Kramer (D) told the Maryland House Environment and Transportation Committee on Friday. Kramer and his [H.B. 1055](#) co-sponsor Del. David Fraser-Hidalgo (D) say their bill is the only way to get Pennsylvania to start paying attention and stop polluting the bay. The legislation would bar Maryland from contracting with Pennsylvania companies or paying for Maryland employees' travel expenses to the state. Kramer says he hopes the bill will spur a Maryland-wide tourism boycott of Pennsylvania, regardless of its success in the Legislature. He has commissioned car window stickers to make his point. They depict a crab that's colored like the Maryland state flag urinating on the state of Pennsylvania. "Hey PA!" the sticker reads, "Quit Polluting My Bay!"...

Journalist Tom Pelton Pays Homage to Chesapeake Bay

BALTIMORE MAGAZINE The writer discusses his new book *The Chesapeake in Focus: Transforming the Natural World*. **Why did you write this book—or why now? It seems like it was a long time coming, comprising years of research and reporting.** It's essentially the culmination of 20 years of my writing and thinking about the Chesapeake Bay. If I drop dead tomorrow, I wanted to leave something that represented what I honestly thought about something I love. Over the decades, I've learned a lot through reporting—through radio shows and for the newspaper [*The Baltimore Sun*] and for some other publications—and I wanted to do the best I can to express the unvarnished truth about this great cultural, ecological masterpiece. I hope that this book is my contribution, in the years ahead, of what one person who has spent a lot of time researching and writing about the bay thought about what needs to be done...**What do you see your role being in all of this?** What the bay really needs is truth telling. We've had a lot of murkiness, not [only] in the bay, but in the reporting on it. My conclusion is that the bay's biggest problem is not poultry manure or even human waste but hogwash. We need to tell the truth about what's really happening, and I think that's my role. The Chesapeake Bay restoration effort is very much like a country club where everyone knows each other and everyone gets along, but you're never going to solve a problem if you can't talk candidly about it. It's not politically correct among the environmental community in Maryland to talk about some of the things that I talk about, but I think we need to address some of these failings in the bay restoration efforts if we're ever going to improve them. Some of the things I recommend in the book are controversial. For example, I recommend a ban on all wild oyster harvesting. Only 1 percent of our oysters are left. If we only had 1 percent of our grizzly bears left, we wouldn't keep hunting grizzly bears. We need to stop dredging for oysters in the bay entirely until the oyster population can rebuild itself. Watermen are already moving toward oyster farming, which is a terrific alternative and does not harm the bay, and it actually can be more lucrative than the harvesting of wild oysters...

Study: Pittsburgh Air Quality Remains Poor

PITTSBURGH TRIBUNE-REVIEW Pittsburgh and the entire state of Pennsylvania have some of the worst outdoor air in the country and quality would improve if electrical energy consumption was reduced, according to a study by a Washington D.C. nonprofit. The American Council for Energy Efficient Economy completed the study in conjunction with Physicians for Social Responsibility. The findings said a 15 percent reduction in annual electric consumption across the country would save six lives a day and curtail nearly 30,000 asthma episodes a year. "The avoided health harms in that one-year period would average more than \$70 per person in cities: the cost of avoided harms would be highest in Pittsburgh, where they would be more than \$200 per person on average," the study said. Rounding out the top five are Buffalo, Louisville, Cleveland and Cincinnati. "Our ranking of states based on the dollar value of avoided health harms shows that Pennsylvania would realize the greatest benefits followed by New York and Ohio, Illinois, Texas, Michigan, Florida and Indiana, Tennessee and North Carolina." Sara Hayes, ACEEE program manager for health and environment who co-authored the study, said if energy consumption was reduced by 15 percent, it would be enough to pay the annual health insurance premiums for 3.6 million families. "The reduction would result in a 14 percent decrease in carbon dioxide," she said. ACEEE said people are harmed even if they can't see a power plant. Also, a recent report from the American Lung Association found four out of every 10 Americans live in a county with unhealthy pollution levels. The report assigned letter grades for metropolitan areas based on air quality and pollution exposure. Pittsburgh, Baltimore and New York City all received an F. By comparison, Indianapolis received a C. "Air pollution from power plants contributes to four of the leading causes of death in the United States: cancer, chronic lower respiratory diseases, heart disease and stroke," said Barbara Gottlieb, director for environment and health at Physicians for Social Responsibility, in a statement. "We can use energy efficiency to save lives and help slow global warming."

EPA: Pruitt makes his mark on environmental justice

GREENWIRE Environmental justice is getting a twist at U.S. EPA, looking to incorporate some of the themes emphasized by Administrator Scott Pruitt. Samantha Dravis, Pruitt's top policy aide, penned a memo dated this past Friday outlining EPA's priorities for the environmental justice program. The document lists a dozen goals guided by Pruitt's refrains of "core mission," "cooperative federalism" and "rule of law." Dravis said in her memo that the agency's dedication to environmental justice "remains strong" and is committed to ensure that "all Americans see the full benefit of environmental protection and have a voice in our work and decisions." "This is as true today — with Administrator Pruitt's emphasis on cleaning up Superfund sites and aggressively attacking exposure to lead," Dravis said, as when President Clinton signed an executive order in 1994 to have all federal agencies address environmental justice concerns. Dravis also noted the move of EPA's Office of Environmental Justice into its Office of Policy, which she leads. That reorganization has attracted criticism from former EPA officials who question the Trump administration's belief in the movement. In her memo, Dravis called the move "a reaffirmation" of Pruitt's commitment to EPA's environmental justice program...

PENNSYLVANIA

PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

'Excuse me, I think you dropped this.' How Philly residents confront litterers You've probably seen it happen: A driver pulls up at a red light and unloads his cabin of empty water bottles onto the sidewalk before zooming away. A kid finishes his Wawa hoagie and tosses the wrapper at the base of a tree. The neighbor drags her garbage bags around the corner and dumps them there, days before trash pickup. In a city so synonymous with litter, some people see these sorts of civic offenses and suffer them in silent frustration. Others engage. "I confront," said Loretta Lupo Tague of Point Breeze. "My husband thinks I'll be shot one day, but I can't help myself. ... The reactions I've seen have been mixed. Some people sheepishly pick up what I point out they dropped — youngsters are more likely to do this — and others defy my taunts." The official suggestion from Keep Philadelphia Beautiful's Michelle Feldman is to not confront litterers, for safety reasons. "We don't want to put anyone in a dangerous situation," Feldman said. The nonprofit partners with

community groups on cleanups and sends volunteers into schools to talk to students about keeping sidewalks and streets litter-free...

Column: A Litterer's Confession, Or The Time I Got Lowered Into A Sewer Let me be clear: I've never been much of a litterer. But it wasn't until a pair of strangers were lowering me headfirst into an open sewer in Queen Village that I swore I would never scorn a trash can again. It's a long story. I'll explain in a minute. But it's what came to mind when I read a report by my colleagues Michael Boren, Julia Terruso, and Michele Tranquilli on the state of trash in Philadelphia. It's never been good in the city, but complaints are surging, and my coworkers are forcing a conversation about what got us here, why some neighborhoods suffer more than others, and what we all need to do to fix it. What struck a chord for me were the residents in the story who readily owned up to their dumping and littering sins. Our trash problem is far too big for us to solve individually (there were more than 50,000 trash-related complaints last year alone, my colleagues reported). But while we have to hold the city accountable — and give it credit for efforts to respond to complaints faster and zero in on the worst dumping spots — we can at least start collectively thinking about the ways we move through our city, and how thoughtless littering drags us down. We can become a block captain, or join cleanup groups, or even just start owning up to our own carelessness. We can stop, for example, hurling bags of dog poop into the sewer. That's what landed me in the muck that night in 2015, a lapse in judgment I am confessing now in the same spirit of civic penitence my fellow dumpers displayed in our pages this week. It was the night before Pope Francis arrived in Philadelphia, three autumns ago. Like any good Catholic, I'd spent most of the day weeping at videos of the pontiff blessing small children. And then I went to happy hour. When I came home, the Beast, my 30-pound cattle dog, was waiting by the door. We perambulated. The Beast went about her business. I collected her ordure (the Beast is a modest gal). There was not a trash can in sight.

Op-Ed: Philly Council's Bike Lane Bill Won't Make Philly's Streets Safer When the protected bike lane on Chestnut Street between 34th and 45th Streets was installed in 2017, it was an incredible victory for bike safety advocates. But a new bill currently in Council might undo the progress made. Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell's recently introduced ordinance (Bill 180134) would impede the ability of the Streets Department to implement simple and necessary street safety measures. The bill effectively requires a Council ordinance any time bike infrastructure is upgraded (including repainting) or modified, stating that Council needs to approve "any modification to an existing bicycle lane that would affect the flow of traffic." This is bad for all of us who want safer city streets, whether on bike, car, or foot. It will further constrict the ability of the experts at the Streets Department and the Office of Transportation and Infrastructure Systems (OTIS) to design and build overdue safety improvements. We should never require a Council vote that could compromise safety over convenience. Not now, not ever. Up until 2012, the Streets Department was able to stripe bike lanes following an evaluation of the street by professional engineers and community engagement. However, in 2012, Council passed legislation mandating its approval for any modifications to travel lanes in the city. This gave district Council members the power to veto new bicycle lanes while dismissing professional opinions on the matter. Because of this dramatic expansion of "councilmanic prerogative," bike lane implementation ground to a screeching halt after years of steady progress under Mayors Ed Rendell and Michael Nutter...

PITTSBURGH TRIBUNE REVIEW

Study: Pittsburgh Air Quality Remains Poor Pittsburgh and the entire state of Pennsylvania have some of the worst outdoor air in the country and quality would improve if electrical energy consumption was reduced, according to a study by a Washington D.C. nonprofit. The American Council for Energy Efficient Economy completed the study in conjunction with Physicians for Social Responsibility. The findings said a 15 percent reduction in annual electric consumption across the country would save six lives a day and curtail nearly 30,000 asthma episodes a year. "The avoided health harms in that one-year period would average more than \$70 per person in cities: the cost of avoided harms would be highest in Pittsburgh, where they would be more than \$200 per person on average," the study said. Rounding out the top five are Buffalo, Louisville, Cleveland and Cincinnati. "Our ranking of states based on the dollar value of avoided health harms shows that Pennsylvania would realize the greatest benefits followed by New York and Ohio, Illinois, Texas, Michigan, Florida and Indiana, Tennessee and North Carolina." Sara Hayes, ACEEE program manager for health and environment who co-authored the study, said if energy consumption was reduced by 15 percent, it would be enough to pay the annual health insurance premiums for 3.6 million families. "The reduction would result in a 14 percent decrease in carbon dioxide," she said. ACEEE said people are harmed even if they can't see a power plant. Also, a recent report from the American Lung Association found four out of every 10 Americans live in a county with unhealthy pollution levels. The

report assigned letter grades for metropolitan areas based on air quality and pollution exposure. Pittsburgh, Baltimore and New York City all received an F. By comparison, Indianapolis received a C. "Air pollution from power plants contributes to four of the leading causes of death in the United States: cancer, chronic lower respiratory diseases, heart disease and stroke," said Barbara Gottlieb, director for environment and health at Physicians for Social Responsibility, in a statement. "We can use energy efficiency to save lives and help slow global warming."

U.S. Supreme Court Ends Lawsuit Against Apollo Nuclear Fuels Plant Operator More than two decades of legal wrangling over whether a former Apollo nuclear fuels plant caused cancers in Armstrong County has been decided by the U.S. Supreme Court. The country's highest court denied hearing an appeal on Feb. 20 to reinstate lawsuits filed by about 70 Apollo-area residents alleging that radioactive emissions from the plant caused cancer. The Supreme Court's rejection ends the eight-year federal court case that sputtered and never made it to trial. That's unlike the first series of lawsuits filed by several hundred plaintiffs that lingered for 14 years in federal court, ending with a settlement of more than \$80 million. "I just wanted to make these big companies aware they just can't ruin people's lives," said Mary Ann Peace, 68, of North Apollo, a plaintiff who has a rare blood cancer. Attorneys for the defendants Babcock & Wilcox Power Generation Group and the Atlantic Richfield Co. didn't immediately return phone calls for comment. They operated a uranium fuel-processing plant founded by the Nuclear Materials and Equipment Corp., or NUMEC, in Apollo and a plutonium plant in Parks Township. The plants operated from about 1957 to the mid-1980s. The companies have long maintained that their operations didn't cause the alleged cancers in Apollo and other surrounding small towns. The individual lawsuits for the 70-plus area residents were filed by attorneys from Motley Rice's law firm in Providence, R.I., and a Pittsburgh law firm, Goldberg, Persky and White. "There are little people here," Peace said of the low-income, rural communities. "We count, too. We have lives and families, and we hurt."...

Proposed Ohiopyle Pedestrian Tunnel Draws Fire Vocal opponents of a proposed pedestrian tunnel underneath Ohiopyle's main road sought to bury the proposal Tuesday despite state highway officials arguing it will improve safety for the more than 1.3 million people flooding the Youghiogheny River tourist town each year. PennDOT officials from Uniontown told more than 150 people who crowded the Ohiopyle Community Center that the tunnel – 16 feet high, 10 feet wide and 50 feet long – is one of many safety improvements in a proposed multi-year \$15 million overhaul of Route 381 from the north end of the Youghiogheny River Bridge to south of the Sugarloaf Road near the Ohiopyle State Park visitors center. "It's O.K. to prevent accidents before they occur. This (underpass) lessens the likelihood of an accident," said Joseph Szczur, district executive of PennDOT District 12-0, which encompasses Fayette and Westmoreland counties. But, Youghiogheny River paddler Barry Adams of Swissvale, declared the tunnel was "a waste of money," noting that only two reportable accidents have occurred in Ohiopyle in the past several years. "Most of the (Ohiopyle State) park visitors will not use this tunnel since it will be out of their way. ... Just do not build this tunnel that is not needed and that very few paddlers, if any, want or even will use," said Adams, the coordinator of the Ohiopyle Over the Falls Festival. Although the project can go ahead without the tunnel, Szczur countered by saying PennDOT is trying to make that section of the road as safe as possible. "What's the cost of a human life," Szczur asked. The tunnel is estimated to cost slightly more than \$1 million and is proposed for the first phase of the project, from November 2018 to May 2019. The project is not scheduled to be completed until May 2020, but that's because the contractor will be prohibited from working from Memorial Day to Labor Day, the height of the tourist season, said Dawn Schilling, transportation planner for McCormick Taylor Inc. of Pittsburgh, a PennDOT consultant.

Cleanways Withdraws Plan For Larger Recycling Center In Westmoreland Westmoreland Cleanways and Recycling is back to square one in its search for a larger recycling site after backing away from a plan to use a former machine shop near Pleasant Unity. Twin Lake Holdings, a Somerset County firm that proposed purchasing the 21-acre Unity property and leasing it to Westmoreland Cleanways, has withdrawn its request for approval of a change in the non-conforming use at the Phillips Road location, the township zoning hearing board announced Tuesday. Ellen Keefe, executive director of Westmoreland Cleanways, said the nonprofit's decision was based in large part on opposition from neighboring residents at a Jan. 23 hearing before the zoning panel. Several residents voiced concern about having discarded items dropped off in their neighborhood and worried that tractor-trailers hauling items from the property would damage the road and endanger pedestrians. "We can't afford to fight the neighbors," Keefe told the Tribune-Review Tuesday. "We decided it was best to pull out." In a Feb. 1 letter to township officials, Keefe said the testimony led her to conclude "we would never be welcome there." Keefe said she also was concerned that the zoning panel, if it had approved the nonconforming use, would include restrictions preventing Cleanways from expanding its drop-off collection of recyclable materials and constructing a new office building and education center, to supplement a 10,000-square-foot Quonset hut

at the property. "You don't buy 20 acres if you can only use three of it," Keefe said. According to Keefe, the Quonset hut was the primary asset the Phillips Road site offered. "It has been very difficult to find a building of that size," she said. "It may end up to be finding some property and building what we want." A plan to relocate to a site near Yukon fell through last year. "We're still looking for the ideal property that is going to allow us to do what we want," she said. "For now, we'll stay where we are." Cleanways leases its headquarters and a 3,400-square-foot building for collecting recyclable items at Innovative Park, off Route 30 in Unity...

Landslide Leaves Pittsburgh Couple Homeless Beth Butler knew something wasn't right when she saw creamy colored mud Thursday on a curve near her house on Greenleaf Street in a steep section of Pittsburgh's West End. Butler, 58, had never seen that before. She called the city's 311 response center. City officials last Friday ordered the home evacuated over landslide concerns. Two days later, Butler watched as the hillside gave away and destroyed the home she and her husband, Charles, shared for 35 years. "The insurance is not going to cover the house or any of the belongings because it was earth movement, and it is not a covered item," Butler said Tuesday. "I guess what I'm going to need to do is secure an apartment for now." She said she and her husband spent years rehabbing the house after purchasing it for \$1,500 in 1983, after it was condemned. The slide spilled onto a highway ramp leading out of the West End. Streets in the area remained closed for a third straight day Tuesday as crews continued working to remove tons of debris...

STATE IMPACT PENNSYLVANIA

Royalties: Why some strike it rich in the natural gas patch, and others strike out When natural gas companies approached Charlie Clark and Jim Barrett about the minerals under their farms, the northern Pennsylvania landowners in neighboring counties both decided to let them drill. They hoped — like so many landowners — to bring in some extra cash. For Clark, the decision has paid off. But Barrett says he feels cheated, and is now suing his gas company. That disparity in how royalties are paid spans the Marcellus Shale, and it's popping up in other oil- and gas-rich regions across the United States. It stems from a complex web of laws, court rulings and legal jargon that determines how money is distributed to property owners who allow energy companies to tap the minerals below their land. Clark and Barrett might have started out with similar hopes, but their different experiences show how tough it can be for landowners to navigate the gas business — and how resolutions are hard to come by. Clark said he's grateful every day for the two gas wells drilled on his dairy farm. He estimates he receives about \$10,000 per month in the form of gas royalties. "This is what we've done with our gas money," Clark said, standing in his new barn filled with dairy cows. "This barn here cost \$40,000 to build it, and we were able to build it out of our pocket." Growing up in rural Susquehanna County in the northeastern corner of Pennsylvania, his family used to scrimp and save just to buy basics, like new shoes....

ALTOONA MIRROR

Intermunicipal Recycling Committee Not Happy With Tyrone's Plan The Intermunicipal Relations Committee that oversees curbside recycling in the four Blair County municipalities mandated to do it aren't going to let one of their own throw away its membership without objection. On Tuesday, at the first meeting of the IRC since last week's decision by Tyrone to start procedures for withdrawing from the group, representatives from Altoona, Logan Township and Hollidaysburg went into executive session to discuss potential litigation connected with that withdrawal plan. Both sides will need to decide whether litigation is the way to go, said IRC solicitor Larry Clapper before the executive session began. But it would be best if it never came to that, he said. There is a protocol in the founding documents of the organization, which began around 1990, for withdrawal, according to Clapper. But it hardly makes sense for Tyrone to leave, given that no elected representative from the borough has attended an IRC meeting since late 2016, said Jim Patterson, a Logan Township supervisor. "How do they know what's going on?" Patterson asked rhetorically. "We're a little confused." Tyrone Borough Manager Ardean Latchford proposed withdrawing to save Tyrone taxpayers the IRC assessment fee, which is \$55,000 for this year. It was \$25,000 last year and nothing during the previous history of the group. The borough already covers its regular curbside recycling obligation with a single-hauler contract and can handle its composting obligation with actions that include opening a compost facility in Reservoir Park, Latchford said...

DOYLESTOWN INTELLIGENCER

State health department to test residents' blood for chemicals After mysterious chemicals were found in their drinking water in 2014, residents of Bucks and Montgomery County towns have wondered how much of the chemicals, called PFAS, had accumulated in their bodies. Now, hundreds will have an answer, after the state received grant money to test

their blood this spring. A grant awarded last week to the Pennsylvania Department of Health will finally answer the question stuck in the minds of many Bucks and Montgomery County residents: Just how bad is it? Tens of thousands of residents along the counties' shared border found out several years ago that they had been exposed to unregulated PFAS chemicals in their drinking water, potentially going back decades. The chemicals, used in firefighting foams at nearby military bases, could have been in the water as far back as the 1970s, building up in their blood all along until the contamination was discovered in 2014. To date, only one local resident has publicly released the results of a blood test for the chemicals, which is difficult to orchestrate due to how rare the chemicals are. As part of a 2017 lawsuit, Ivyland resident Dorothy Palmer revealed she had a blood level of 31 parts per billion of one of the chemicals, which is 15 times the national average. But hundreds more could know their levels soon. Last week, the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), a professional organization, awarded a \$175,000 grant to the DOH "to support biomonitoring efforts" for the chemicals, according to an announcement on its website. New York state also received \$175,000, with funding originating from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Biomonitoring is a term typically used to describe blood testing for PFAS. In an email, PADOH spokesperson Nate Wardle confirmed the funds will be used for testing. However, the tests costs hundreds of dollars per person, and Wardle said only a few hundred residents will be included. That's compared to the more than 70,000 current residents who are believed to have been exposed to high levels of the chemicals in Warminster, Warrington and Horsham, in addition to uncounted numbers of past residents. "We are hoping to offer biomonitoring to approximately 400 residents," Wardle wrote in an email. "Resident households will be selected based off of (CDC protocols), which involve random sampling based on address."...

HARRISBURG PATRIOT NEWS

Harrisburg Area Scientist Fuels Buzz Behind News North Pole Temps Surged Past Freezing One of the biggest news stories on Tuesday was that of the extraordinary thaw that swelled temperatures in the North Pole to the melting point. One of the chief voices helping to provide buzz-worthiness to the story belongs to a Harrisburg-area native who got his start in climate science as a student at Central Dauphin High School. Zack Labe, a climate scientist working on his PhD at the University of California at Irvine, confirmed the analyses that stunned the science world: that temperatures across the Arctic recently had risen more than 50 degrees (30 degrees Celsius) above normal. Labe was first interviewed by The Washington Post, whose story featured some of his tweets, which further fueled interest in the story. Labe's phone was ringing off the hook on Tuesday as members from national and international media reached out to him for input for stories on the stunning findings. "It's a little crazy," he said. Labe is a little used to the attention, as a Central Dauphin student - class of 2011 - he garnered attention as one of just 28 high school students who were accepted for membership in the American Meteorological Society. Labe's passion for climate change goes back to those school days when he immersed himself in earth sciences and filled his bedroom state-of-the-art weather equipment. He even had an account with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration that gave him information to interpret for a weather forecast. His predictions were usually spot on. On Tuesday he once again garnered attention and perhaps, more importantly, that of non-scientists, with analysis showing that a "warm intrusion" had penetrated through the heart of the Central Arctic bringing temperatures to the entire region to the highest levels ever recorded in February...

READING EAGLE

Money Donated To Finish Bridge Along Schuylkill River Trail Union Township, PA — Walking her bicycle up a steep path along the Schuylkill River Trail, Peggy Whittaker watched vehicles speed by on Route 724 near the village of Monocacy in Union Township. "This is a very dangerous spot to go down," said Whittaker as she stood atop the hill on a recent morning. "The cars whip by quickly." Bicyclists using the trail are required to dismount at the slopes on either side of Route 724 that lead to the highway crossing. Concerned about the safety of trail users, Whittaker donated funding, an undisclosed amount, that was needed to complete a \$1 million pedestrian bridge that will span 115 feet across the highway. "I am interested in donating to trails because young families really like to get out and use the trails," said Whittaker, 77. "I go outside every day. I go biking and walking." The bridge will be named after Whittaker's late husband, Dr. Richard P. Whittaker, an orthopedic surgeon at Pottstown Hospital who passed away Feb. 26, 2016, at age 75. With the funding in place, Schuylkill River Greenways National Heritage Area will host a ceremony on Saturday at 10 a.m. to celebrate the final design phase of the project. Bob Folwell, Greenways trail manager, thanked Whittaker for the contribution, noting the project has been in the planning stages for about three years. "Peggy Whittaker is very generous," Folwell said. Construction is expected to begin in spring 2019 and be completed at the end of that year. The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources awarded \$516,501 for the project. The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission provided \$325,636. Wilson Consulting Group Inc., Mechanicsburg, Cumberland

County, is working on a preliminary design. When the design is complete, Greenways is required to obtain approval for the project from PennDOT and the state Department of Environmental Protection. Folwell said there haven't been any accidents reported at the crossing, noting that most trail users live near the trail and are aware of the steep slopes leading to the crossing. The slopes were created by a former railroad bridge that was removed from the intersection...

WILKES-BARRE CITIZENS VOICE

Chemical Release Sends 11 Offset Workers To Hospital In Luzerne DALLAS TWP. — Federal and state officials are investigating Tuesday morning's chemical release at Offset Paperback Manufacturing that sent 11 employees to the hospital and led to the facility's evacuation. The facility along Memorial Highway was evacuated around 7:30 a.m. when employees fell ill from the release of a chemical commonly used in the printing industry, said Deputy Chief John Wilkes, of the Back Mountain Regional Fire and EMS. Officials used a school bus to transport 11 employees to Wilkes-Barre General Hospital for non-life-threatening injuries, Wilkes said. "Most were complaining of headaches and itchy skin," Wilkes said. Members of Dallas Twp. and Luzerne County's emergency management agencies responded to the scene. A hazardous materials response team from Datom Products in Dunmore was called in to decontaminate the site. The state Department of Environmental Protection was aware of the situation and was being updated by Luzerne County EMA, according to Colleen Connelly, a DEP spokeswoman. The plant, owned by Bertelsmann Printing Group USA, manufactures paperback books and employs about 400 people. Offset Paperback officials released a statement around 1:15 p.m.: "At approximately 7:30 a.m., several employees and members of management noticed a strong chemical odor coming from an isolated area within the facility. The fire company was immediately contacted and all employees have been evacuated while the building was being inspected by the appropriate authorities, including a HAZMAT team. In an abundance of caution, those employees potentially exposed to any chemicals have been transported to the local hospital for further evaluation. We will continue to do everything possible to ensure the safety of our employees as this situation develops." Around the time of the release, the company said it "received clearance that it is now safe for our employees to reenter the building." The company's statement noted that the odor was isolated and contained to one area within the facility and there was no impact on the local community. The federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration said it was conducting an investigation following the release of hazardous materials. This company has no prior OSHA inspection history, according to OSHA officials. OSHA has up to six months to complete its investigation, a news release said.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

WASHINGTON POST

11 people sickened after hazmat incident at Fort Myer in Arlington Eleven people, including some Marines, "started to feel ill" after an envelope containing an unknown substance was opened Tuesday at Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall in Arlington, authorities said. At around 5:55 p.m., the Arlington Fire Department tweeted that 11 people were sickened after a letter was opened in an administrative building at Fort Myer. Three people were transported to the hospital, the tweet said, and were in stable condition. A spokesman with the Arlington County Fire Department said firefighters were assisting Fort Myer officials with the incident. The U.S. Marine Corps said in a tweet that a letter containing an unknown substance was received, and the building where it was opened was evacuated. Several Marines are now getting medical treatment, the tweet said, and the Marines will be coordinating with the FBI to investigate further. Maj. Brian Block, a Marine spokesman, said in a statement Tuesday night that people in the building where the envelope arrived "took immediate preventative measures by evacuating the building." U.S. military officials are coordinating with local hazmat teams and the FBI. "Several Marines are receiving medical care as a result of this incident," Block said, adding that the investigation is ongoing. Photographs posted on social media show numerous police cars at the Henderson Hall gate of the base, a complex that includes several small military installations near the Pentagon. Henderson Hall is at the southern edge of Arlington National Cemetery, and used as a headquarters building for the service. Fort Myer firefighters said they were trying to identify the substance.

Central federal jobs site tightens security controls The government on Tuesday changed the lock on the front door into federal employment in a way intended to make it easier for job-seekers to get in and to better protect their personal information inside. Two-factor authentication is now required for the usajobs.gov site, the central repository of job openings where an average of 20,000 vacancies are posted at any one time. In addition to a username and password, users now must provide either a cellphone number to receive a text of an access code to enter each time — or a landline

number to receive the code in a call. "We're really excited about the positive impact to the user experience," said USAJobs program manager Michelle Earley of the Office of Personnel Management. She said that more than 60 percent of user support needs are related to authentication. While individual agencies make hiring decisions, the OPM operates the central job application site, where prospective federal employees — and current ones looking to change jobs — can create résumés, and search and apply for openings. About 11 million people have accounts...

Cherry blossom forecast: Peak bloom will come about a week early this year For the third year in a row, cherry blossoms are likely to reach peak bloom on the early side in Washington. Already, green color has emerged in the buds at the Tidal Basin, indicating the bloom process has initiated, somewhat earlier than normal. We are predicting peak bloom during the window between March 23 and 27 this year, centered on the 25th. This is roughly a week ahead of the recent (30-year) average of March 31. Peak bloom, defined as when 70 percent of the cherry blossoms along the Tidal Basin are in bloom, should coincide with the beginning of this year's National Cherry Blossom Festival, which spans March 20 to April 15...

DELAWARE

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL

Beach replenishment to stretch into summer in Delaware The Army Corps of Engineers has released its timetable for beach replenishment work along the southern Delaware Coast.

Natural resource police charge 2 for illegal dumping Police charged two men for dumping trash in Woodland Beach Wildlife Area near Smyrna and Norman G. Wilder Wildlife Area near Felton.

What to know about the Five Points intersection solutions group Public transportation improvements and alternative locations for economic development were on the table.

DELAWARE CAPE GAZETTE

Millsboro farm receives national award for environmental stewardship A Millsboro poultry farm was one of six farms nationwide to be recognized for environmental excellence during the 2018 International Production & Processing Expo, recently held in Atlanta. Baker's Acres Farm was awarded the U.S. Poultry & Egg Association's Family Farm Environmental Excellence Award. USPOULTRY sponsors the annual awards in recognition of exemplary environmental stewardship by family farmers engaged in poultry and egg production. Terry Baker was given an award placard to display at the entrance to his family's farm and a \$1,000 check. Applicants were rated in several categories, including manure management, nutrient management planning, community involvement, wildlife enhancement techniques, innovative nutrient management techniques, and participation in education and outreach programs. Applications were reviewed and farm visits conducted by a team of environmental professionals from universities, regulatory agencies and state poultry associations. Baker's Acres Farm is owned and operated by Terry Baker Jr., who raises broiler chickens for Mountaire Farms. Following in his father's footsteps, Baker started his career in the poultry processing side of the industry, eventually working for Mountaire Farms. Wanting to spend more time with his young and growing family, he left Mountaire to farm full time. He has since successfully expanded the size of his farm through the use of new technology and innovative management practices. For example, Baker and his wife Mena have implemented several new conservation practices since they purchased the farm in 2007, including sheds for manure storage, heavy-use area pads in front of all houses and storage buildings, grassy swales for stormwater retention, and environmental buffer zones. Baker also has planted a wide variety of vegetation around the farm to prevent erosion, reduce the farm's environmental impact and provide a visual buffer for good neighbor relations. The Bakers also have been utilizing a comprehensive nutrient management plan for the past 10 years. The Baker family's positive impact on the environment, however, is not limited to their farm. Baker and his business partner Victor Clark spent several years researching, testing and eventually introducing an alternative animal mortality management practice on Delmarva. Large on-farm freezer units allow growers like Baker to safely store and preserve the farm's daily routine mortality, so the material can later be transported to a rendering facility and recycled into valuable commodities...

DELAWARE PUBLIC MEDIA (NPR)

Tainted water found in private well near Blades Testing on private wells in Blades area have discovered water from at least one is contaminated. Officials from DNREC and Delaware's Division of Public Health say one of the 39 private wells sampled by the EPA found elevated levels of perfluorinated compounds (PFCs). The homeowner has been contacted and given a home carbon filtration system for their water supply. So far, 15 of the 39 private well test results have been received back from the EPA. More are expected to come back this week, and state officials say anyone with high PFC levels will receive a filtration system. Earlier this month, the Town of Blades municipal wells were found to be tainted by PFCs. The town received a carbon filtration system to treat its drinking water system, and last week tests showed that water was safe to drink and use for cooking again once again. DNREC and DPH will hold another public meeting on the drinking water in and around Blades Thursday night. The agencies say the 7 p.m. meeting at the Blades Fire hall will focus more on private wells in the area.

WEST VIRGINIA

CHARLESTON GAZETTE-MAIL

Drinking in the Berkeley Springs International Water Tasting competition BERKELEY SPRINGS — Each year, dozens of bottled and city waters put their reputations in the hands of 12 — mostly inexperienced — judges. This past weekend, I was one of them. In its 28th year, the Berkeley Springs International Water Tasting is dubbed “the most prestigious in the world.” Past winners have slapped medals on the sides of their bottles and even become sources for new bottlers. When asked by one of its organizers, Jill Klein Rone, to be a judge at this year's water tasting, I was intrigued. She promised I would become a “certified water taster” — and, knowing the event was in its 28th year, I wanted to see it for myself. However, I couldn't help but wonder what qualified me to rate water from across the country and around the world. Did I deserve the honor? I was not the only judge who felt this way. In fact, out of 12, 10 of us were brand new. No one seemed to feel like an expert. Aside from knowing my body is two-thirds water, thanks to high school science, I was not knowledgeable on the subject — or so I thought. When confronted about how inexperienced I and many, if not all, of the judges were, the event's water expert, Arthur von Wiesenberger, reassured me. “Really, anyone can be a water taster. We all are,” he said. “We do it subconsciously. I mean, even kids know water they like and water they don't like. Animals know what water they like and water they don't like.” He's right. Water is not like wine or apple pie. We all drink it. However, to rate the waters as an expert, we required a little training. Before the tasting began, von Wiesenberger took us through a certification class. We were told how the different nuances of water can be affected by minerals and trace elements from its source. We were taught to rate each water based on appearance, odor, flavor, mouthfeel and aftertaste, as well an overall impression on a scale of one to 14. Von Wiesenberger then tested our taste buds with three different waters — tap, bottled and sparkling — to ensure we could tell the differences between them. He then presented us each with our certificates and his book, “The Taste of Water,” which explained how each water is different and had a dictionary of water-tasting terms. We went to work after that, tasting a flight of 15 different municipal waters, which offered varying chemical flavors, but mostly chlorine. In tap water, the flavors can vary from the chlorine used to treat it, to the iron acquired from pipes and storage tanks, to sulfur, which is found in natural hot springs. We were instructed to show no reaction to avoid swaying the opinion of other judges...

ASSOCIATED PRESS (W. Va.)

Groups Fear ORSANCO Proposal May Weaken Ohio River Water Protections TOLEDO, Ohio (AP) - A commission that watches over the Ohio River's health across six states may give up setting pollution standards for the waterway, raising concerns it would weaken protections for a source of drinking water for 5 million people. The Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission is expected to decide this year whether to leave the responsibility of setting water quality standards up to the individual states along the 980-mile river. That would allow each state to set its own guidelines for pollutants and waste water discharges from factories and sewer systems as long as they meet the minimums set by the

federal Clean Water Act. Some drinking water utilities are against the idea while environmental groups worry it will create confusing and disjointed regulations up and down the river. "How do you have two sets of standards for two states on opposite sides of the river," said Gail Hesse, director of the National Wildlife Federation's Great Lakes water program. The 27-member commission, which has representatives from the six states next to the river as well as from New York and Virginia, has said this is one of several possibilities being considered and nothing has been decided. However, it also said most of its members now are in favor of ending its role of setting pollution control standards. "We won't move forward with a change that would weaken water quality," said Richard Harrison, the commission's executive director. Those within the commission who back the idea believe that its role setting pollution standards is redundant because states already are setting and enforcing their own rules for waterways and because the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has its own guidelines, too. A group of commissioners opposed to the move points out that there are some regulations the agency has that aren't within the state and EPA standards. They said that state and EPA standards "may not be adequate to protect the aquatic life and uses of the Ohio River." Shifting the role of setting pollution standards to the states, supporters say, would allow the agency to concentrate on existing efforts that include monitoring water quality and aquatic life, responding to spills and river cleanup. An advisory group representing chemical and manufacturing plants along the river backs giving pollution oversight to the states, saying that the commission's current standards are an "increased burden on the regulated community with little or no added value." But another advisory group made up of drinking water utilities is opposed because it says the commission's standards includes water quality protections that aren't covered by state and federal rules. The commission is expected to decide in June whether to move forward with the proposal and then would make a final decision in the fall.

MARYLAND

BALTIMORE SUN

Letter: Hogan allows development that pollutes the Bay The recent disclosure that the massive Four Seasons project on Kent Island is polluting nearby marshes and waters that feed into the Chesapeake Bay proves that previous state administrations were correct in withholding approval of this project ("Long-scrutinized Four Seasons at Kent Island project facing penalties for pollution," Feb. 23). The Hogan administration's willingness to let it proceed illustrates what they have in common with the Trump administration: rule in favor of business at the expense of other considerations like the environment. Given the years-long and ongoing effort to clean up the bay, Maryland needs to return to the type of administration that will be willing to say no to water-polluting projects, as well as to those that cut down old forests which filter the ground water that feeds into the Chesapeake Bay...

BALTIMORE MAGAZINE

Journalist Tom Pelton Pays Homage to Chesapeake Bay The writer discusses his new book *The Chesapeake in Focus: Transforming the Natural World*. **Why did you write this book—or why now? It seems like it was a long time coming, comprising years of research and reporting.** It's essentially the culmination of 20 years of my writing and thinking about the Chesapeake Bay. If I drop dead tomorrow, I wanted to leave something that represented what I honestly thought about something I love. Over the decades, I've learned a lot through reporting—through radio shows and for the newspaper [*The Baltimore Sun*] and for some other publications—and I wanted to do the best I can to express the unvarnished truth about this great cultural, ecological masterpiece. I hope that this book is my contribution, in the years ahead, of what one person who has spent a lot of time researching and writing about the bay thought about what needs to be done...

SALISBURY DAILY TIMES

Ocean Pines residents get 13th consecutive exemption from Chesapeake Bay flush fee For the 13th consecutive year, the Maryland Department of the Environment has exempted residents in the Ocean Pines Sanitary Service Area from paying the \$5 monthly charge into the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund. This exemption will result in an annual savings of \$60 per household in Ocean Pines, according to MDE. Commonly referred to as the "flush fee," the Bay Restoration Fund is a dedicated fund financed by residents and businesses served by wastewater treatment plants throughout Maryland. The fee was signed into law in 2004 and the first fees were charged in 2005. "The Ocean Pines WWTP has met

the criteria for exemption each year since the fund was enacted in 2005, resulting in an overall savings of roughly \$540 per household and a total savings of \$4.4 million to the Ocean Pines SSA residents and businesses since inception of the fee," Enterprise Fund Controller Jessica Wilson said. Bay Restoration funds are used to upgrade publicly-owned wastewater treatment plants throughout Maryland, with enhanced nutrient removal technology to reduce nutrient discharges to the state's waterways. The fund began at \$2.50 per month per household, or equivalent dwelling unit, starting on July 1, 2005, and increased to \$5 per month as of July 1, 2012. On-site septic system users throughout the state began paying a similar \$5 fee per month in 2012 as well, with funds used to upgrade failing septic systems in the critical areas with best available technology for nutrient reduction...

WBAL RADIO

New Partnership Sets Goal Of 10 Billion New Oysters By 2025 In order to give a shock to the Chesapeake Bay's system, a partnership was announced Monday with a goal of adding 10 billion new oysters to the Chesapeake Bay by 2025. Will Baker, president of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, said an effort like this is long overdue. "Oysters are like the coral reefs in the Caribbean; they're absolutely essential to the ecosystem called the Chesapeake Bay," Baker said. "Oysters are so much more than the tasty bivalves that many know them to be. They are a crucial part of our ocean planet," said John Racanelli, National Aquarium chief executive officer. "They help keep our waterways clean by removing harmful pollutants, and they provide a hospitable place for other animals to live, from the backwaters of the Chesapeake Bay to the vast Atlantic Ocean. We're proud to collaborate with the Chesapeake 10 Billion Oyster Partnership to revitalize the national treasure that is the Chesapeake Bay." A partnership of more than 20 organizations, businesses, nonprofits and educational institutions plan to help add the oysters. The University of Maryland is one of those institutions, and it has the capacity to produce about 2 billion oysters...

WJZ- CBS BALTIMORE

Baltimore City Council Moves Styrofoam Ban Forward BALTIMORE (WJZ/AP) — The Baltimore City Council has moved a bill forward that would ban plastic foam containers for carryout food and drinks — a measure that Mayor Catherine Pugh has supported. Our media partner The Baltimore Sun reports a vote Monday night unanimously gave preliminary approval to the bill. The ban aims to cut down on litter in the city. The bill would create criminal fines for businesses that fail to comply with the ban on containers made of polystyrene foam, a substance more commonly known by its brand name, Styrofoam. Styrofoam has long been used as an inexpensive convenience, but it isn't free of other costs. It's a major source of Baltimore's litter, with much of it washing off streets and alleys and into the Inner Harbor and the Chesapeake Bay. And it isn't cheap to recycle. Mercedes Thompson, a student organizer at a rally at Baltimore City Hall in support of the bill earlier this month, said "Styrofoam is recyclable, but it's extremely difficult." "You have to collect all the Styrofoam, clean it, wash it and take it to a recycling facility," Thompson added. Talk of a Styrofoam ban has been around for years, but backers think this time is different. "I think there is momentum," says Blue Water Baltimore Executive Director Jenn Aiosa. "We are seeing a lot of interest in the business community. We are also delivering the testimony of over 100 businesses who say they are willing to make the change." Over the past three years, Montgomery and Prince George's counties and Washington, D.C. have imposed bans on polystyrene foam products...

CECIL WHIG

Elkton starts 'smart' water meter changeover ELKTON — The town Department of Public Works started making the rounds this month in Delancy Village to upgrade residents to "smart" water meters, which will increase accuracy for customers and the town that bills them...

EASTON STAR DEMOCRAT

Commentary: Can oyster farming save the Bay? For almost 50 years, government officials, conservationists and watermen have sought solutions to restore oyster fisheries on the Chesapeake Bay. While not always in agreement on strategy and tactics, they continued to invest valuable public resources in oyster restoration efforts...

MY EASTERN SHORE MD

Sustainable art leads back to the bees KENT ISLAND — Sustainability and sharing opportunity is one way local businesswoman Kara Brooks finds a way to give back to the environment and her community. Brook's home and farm

and her bees are located in Queen Anne's County. In 2008, Brooks closed her web communications business of over 20 years with a client list ranging from the White House to large financial services firms. After decades in the two-dimensional world of computer-based design, Brooks said she craved texture, "the kind that you can only achieve by hand. I tried different media, and nothing really 'did it' for me." Brooks discovered a painting by Tony Scherman and knew she wanted to know more about encaustic technique. Encaustic is paint made with beeswax, damar resin and pigment, explained Brooks, and bees wax is essential to her art. "The idea of a sustainable art form was appealing to me," said Brooks, leading her to become a beekeeper to create a resource for bees wax. In the process of learning about beekeeping, Brooks said she learned about the bees and the tragic illnesses that were often unexplained and killing them. She decided that whatever direction the business would go, she would always do what she could to support the bees. With the support and involvement of her husband, on the farm over time, the Brooks' shifted their crops to be nectar-rich, indigenous plant material that supports bees. It has taken more than six years to get where they are, said Brooks, noting it has not been a fast or easy process. The first year, Brooks said she got a lot more honey than wax. First, she gave it away, and people came back for more. In the process of reinventing herself, Brooks found a second career as an artist and a maker. "I started small and slowly with a jar of honey, a bar of soap, a beeswax candle, a lavender scrub and a lavender body butter," said Brooks. "Within a year, I added honey lip balm. Each product was carefully considered and took a lot of trial and error before I arrived at the finished product. Today we have over 125 honey gifts and spa products for sale in our store and on our site (www.waxingkara.com)."

KENT COUNTY NEWS

MdTA officials outline bridge study, hear community concerns CHESTERTOWN — As a multi-year study for potential Chesapeake Bay crossing sites keeps moving forward, Maryland Transportation Authority officials are continuing to seek public input on where people would want a new bridge. Melissa Williams, director of the MdTA's Division of Project Planning and Program Development, and Heather Lowe, the study's project manager, appeared before the Kent County Bay Bridge Monitoring Committee Monday, fielding questions from committee members and local residents....

VIRGINIA

NEWPORT NEWS DAILY PRESS

Chesapeake Bay could get 10 billion new oysters by 2025...In the president's proposed fiscal year 2019 budget, Donald Trump would slash funding for the Chesapeake Bay Program, which has worked to restore the bay since 1983, by about 90 percent, from nearly \$73 million to \$7.3 million. Congress, however, tends to be more generous to cleanup efforts. When Trump wanted to ...

DANVILLE REGISTER AND BEE

Danville summit sheds light on industrial hemp Industrial hemp, which has a wide array of uses, has not been grown in the United States since the 1930s, because it is perceived by many as being marijuana. Marijuana and industrial hemp are both strains of the cannabis plant. But industrial hemp does not contain the high levels of THC that make the flower on some varieties of cannabis intoxicating. Even so, it remains illegal to grow in much of the country. Panelists in Danville for an Industrial Hemp Summit at the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research spent Tuesday talking about the uses for industrial hemp and answering questions from more than 150 people from around the globe who attended the conference. Eric Henry, president of TS Designs in Burlington, North Carolina, said the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency and various agencies within different states are overseeing testing being allowed in different areas. But efforts to have the plant removed from the controlled substance lists have not yet been successful everywhere. "Yes, it does contain small amounts of THC, and that's what concerns them," Henry said, noting that the level in industrial hemp is far below the range where it would be considered a drug. The Industrial Hemp Summit, which kicked off Monday night, was hosted by the Institute and Halifax County Agricultural Development, and sponsored by the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. In Kentucky, local farmers are interested in finding a replacement for tobacco, said Doris Hamilton, the industrial hemp program manager for the Kentucky Department of Agriculture. "Farmers are desperate for something to be an economic boon," she said...

ASSOCIATED PRESS (Va.)

Project aims to get 10B oysters in the Chesapeake Bay NORFOLK, Va. (AP) — A coalition of environmental groups and foundations has made a goal of adding 10 billion oysters to the Chesapeake Bay over the next several years. The Virginian-Pilot reports foundation officials hope the increased cooperation will accelerate the oyster drive and add to pressure against the Trump administration's proposed cutbacks in federal funding for bay cleanup. Will Baker with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation tells WTOP-FM that oysters are a keystone species and are vital to the health of the bay. Foundation officials say achieving the goal will require several things including greater sanctuary oyster reef construction and expansion along with more replenishment of public oyster harvest grounds. In recent years, oysters have made an impressive comeback after decades of dramatic declines in oyster populations.

MISCELLANEOUS

GREENWIRE

Chesapeake Bay: Md. lawmakers urge boycott of Pa. over pollution Fed up with Pennsylvania pollution fouling the Chesapeake Bay and worried that U.S. EPA won't act decisively, a pair of Maryland state delegates are proposing an unusual solution: a boycott of the Keystone State. "At some point in time, you've got to stop getting punched in the face and stand up to a bully, regardless of the consequences," Del. Benjamin Kramer (D) told the Maryland House Environment and Transportation Committee on Friday. Kramer and his H.B. 1055 co-sponsor Del. David Fraser-Hidalgo (D) say their bill is the only way to get Pennsylvania to start paying attention and stop polluting the bay. The legislation would bar Maryland from contracting with Pennsylvania companies or paying for Maryland employees' travel expenses to the state. Kramer says he hopes the bill will spur a Maryland-wide tourism boycott of Pennsylvania, regardless of its success in the Legislature. He has commissioned car window stickers to make his point. They depict a crab that's colored like the Maryland state flag urinating on the state of Pennsylvania. "Hey PA!" the sticker reads, "Quit Polluting My Bay!"

EPA: Pruitt makes his mark on environmental justice Environmental justice is getting a twist at U.S. EPA, looking to incorporate some of the themes emphasized by Administrator Scott Pruitt. Samantha Dravis, Pruitt's top policy aide, penned a memo dated this past Friday outlining EPA's priorities for the environmental justice program. The document lists a dozen goals guided by Pruitt's refrains of "core mission," "cooperative federalism" and "rule of law." Dravis said in her memo that the agency's dedication to environmental justice "remains strong" and is committed to ensure that "all Americans see the full benefit of environmental protection and have a voice in our work and decisions." "This is as true today — with Administrator Pruitt's emphasis on cleaning up Superfund sites and aggressively attacking exposure to lead," Dravis said, as when President Clinton signed an executive order in 1994 to have all federal agencies address environmental justice concerns. Dravis also noted the move of EPA's Office of Environmental Justice into its Office of Policy, which she leads. That reorganization has attracted criticism from former EPA officials who question the Trump administration's belief in the movement. In her memo, Dravis called the move "a reaffirmation" of Pruitt's commitment to EPA's environmental justice program...

Air Pollution: EPA rejects challenges to TVA plant permit U.S. EPA has rejected a pair of related administrative challenges to the operating permit for one of the Tennessee Valley Authority's coal-fired power plants. The Sierra Club filed an initial petition in August 2016 questioning the sulfur dioxide emissions limit and other aspects of the state-issued Title V permit for the Gallatin Fossil Plant in north-central Tennessee. The environmental group followed up with another round of objections in a separate petition last November in a response to proposed changes to the permit for the 976-megawatt facility. In a recent order denying both petitions, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt dismissed some of the group's claims as moot in light of the permit changes. He also rejected the challenge to the sulfur dioxide limit on the grounds that it was set by a separate "preconstruction permit" issued by the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) and thus fell outside the scope of the Sierra Club's challenge...

Drought: The key to surviving dry spell? 'Rock moisture,' study says A dense grove of evergreen trees in Northern California survived the state's five-year drought by drawing on "rock moisture" 50 feet below the surface, according to a new study. Researchers say the finding could have implications for how we understand forests and drought, and even

for how scientists think about water flow in streams. "I think we've identified an unrecognized process in the Earth's surface that matters to a lot of things," said William Dietrich, an earth and planetary scientist at the University of California, Berkeley, and co-author of the study. "This discovery of 'rock moisture' makes us have to look at a lot more questions." The study, published yesterday in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, suggests that tree roots in the forest in Mendocino County sometimes reach more than 50 feet below the surface. There, they can nourish themselves with a vast reserve of water stored in the bedrock, allowing them to avoid the kind of die-off that happened in other parts of the state...

Regulations: Judge throws out case against Trump executive order A federal judge today dismissed a lawsuit challenging President Trump's executive order requiring agencies to scrap two regulations for every new one created. Judge Randolph Moss of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia tossed out the suit on procedural grounds after finding that public interest and environmental plaintiffs did not have legal standing to sue. "The court must conclude that it lacks jurisdiction," wrote Moss, an Obama appointee. Along with requiring federal agencies to eliminate two rules for every new one, Trump's January 2017 order established a regulatory budget for how much agencies can spend on new rules each year. The Natural Resources Defense Council, Public Citizen and Communications Workers of America brought suit, alleging that the order was illegal because it attempted to override laws passed by Congress that may require rulemaking...

Pruitt's Superfund guy knows about living near toxic sites BRISTOW, Okla. — When he's at his home here, Albert "Kelly" Kelly could walk to a Superfund site in just a few minutes. He might have to fight his way through thick brush. But he wouldn't have to leave his family's land. A family company, Kelly Brothers Business Trust, owns land all around town, including at least two parcels adjacent to the abandoned Wilcox Oil Co. refinery, which was placed on the Superfund list four years ago. U.S. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, a friend and fellow Oklahoman from up the turnpike in Tulsa, last year put Kelly in charge of "streamlining" Superfund. The contamination cleanup program is a top priority for Pruitt, who has made it central to the idea that he's an environmental reformer with a "back to basics" agenda. Kelly brought no professional experience in environmental policy or regulation to his new role. He'd spent most of his career running the family bank, called SpiritBank. What he did bring is a family history entwined with a town of about 4,200 people that has four contaminated industrial sites, one of them on the Superfund list...

CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Another break for Foxconn? EPA office led by Gov. Walker's former aide to decide smog pollution rules Armed with years of air quality testing and other evidence, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency tentatively concluded late last year that most of southeast Wisconsin needs to take more aggressive action to reduce lung-damaging smog. The decision infuriated Gov. Scott Walker, a former Republican presidential candidate who had wooed Foxconn Technology Group to Racine County a few months earlier with \$3 billion in financial incentives, promises to relax state environmental laws and access to Lake Michigan water for a sprawling new electronics factory, just north of the Illinois border in an area with some of the state's dirtiest air. Walker and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources blame Chicago for making the air unhealthy to breathe in parts of the state. "Wisconsin is not the issue," a Walker spokeswoman said. But an EPA analysis of industrial pollution, traffic patterns and weather shows Wisconsin is at least partially responsible for its own smog problems. Within the next three months, the same regional EPA office that prepared the Wisconsin analysis will make a final decision about how much — or how little — Foxconn and other companies must do to curb smog-forming pollution. Only now the Chicago-based office is led by Cathy Stepp, a former top aide to Walker who spent the past three years urging EPA officials to exempt Wisconsin from the smog regulations. Walker once said he chose Stepp to lead the Natural Resources Department because she has a "chamber of commerce mentality." During her six-year tenure at the state agency, Stepp rolled back enforcement of environmental laws, cut funding for scientific research and scrubbed references to human-caused climate change from the department's website... Asked by the Tribune if she has a conflict of interest in her new job at the EPA, a spokesman emailed a one-sentence statement announcing that Stepp will recuse herself from any involvement in the Wisconsin smog case after consulting with the agency's ethics office. Her staff declined to make Stepp available for an interview. Former top EPA officials from the Obama and George W. Bush administrations welcomed Stepp's decision. But they still are concerned that the Trump administration will undermine the health-based smog standards as part of a broader attack on clean air and water regulations, noting that EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt already has attempted to delay the regulations from taking effect. ...

THE ATLANTIC

The Trump Administration Finds That Environmental Racism is Real A new report from the Environmental Protection Agency finds that people of color are much more likely to live near polluters and breathe polluted air—even as the agency seeks to roll back regulations on pollution. “Poison is the wind that blows from the north and south and east.” Marvin Gaye wasn’t an environmental scientist, but his 1971 single “Mercy Mercy Me (The Ecology)” provides a stark and useful environmental analysis, complete with warnings of overcrowding and climate change. The song doesn’t explicitly mention race, but its place in Gaye’s *What’s Going On* album portrays a black Vietnam veteran, coming back to his segregated community and envisioning the hell that people endure. Gaye’s prophecies relied on the qualitative data of storytelling—of long-circulated anecdotes and warnings within black communities of bad air and water, poison, and cancer. But those warnings have been buttressed by study after study indicating that people of color face disproportionate risks from pollution, and that polluting industries are often located in the middle of their communities. Late last week, even as the Environmental Protection Agency and the Trump administration continued a plan to dismantle many of the institutions built to address those disproportionate risks, researchers embedded in the EPA’s National Center for Environmental Assessment released a study indicating that people of color are much more likely to live near polluters and breathe polluted air. Specifically, the study finds that people in poverty are exposed to more fine particulate matter than people living above poverty. According to the study’s authors, “results at national, state, and county scales all indicate that non-Whites tend to be burdened disproportionately to Whites.” The study focuses on particulate matter, a group of both natural and manmade microscopic suspensions of solids and liquids in the air that serve as air pollutants. Anthropogenic particulates include automobile fumes, smog, soot, oil smoke, ash, and construction dust, all of which have been linked to serious health problems. Particulate matter was named a known definite carcinogen by the International Agency for Research on Cancer, and it’s been named by the EPA as a contributor to several lung conditions, heart attacks, and possible premature deaths. The pollutant has been implicated in both asthma prevalence and severity, low birth weights, and high blood pressure...